

Annie Bukacek's Testimony for SB 406
Senate Judiciary Committee
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Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee:

I'm here to argue for the personhood of the unborn. In 1973, the year Roe v Wade was made federal law, it was known that human life begins at conception. That is not philosophy, theology, or political ideology but scientific fact. The humanity of the tiny person just conceived was not disputed in scientific circles then nor is it disputed now. It was established fact in 1973 that the unborn child has its own genome, separate from the mother, and distinctively human. At conception, it has the entire genome it will have at birth and beyond. Its gender, hair and eye color, and other heritable traits are established at conception.

That was known in 1973, however, little was known about what unborn human life was like because there were only meager beginnings of fetology, the study of the fetus. The science of fetology exploded in the mid 1970s with technology such as hysteroscopy, more sensitive ultrasound, electronic fetal heart monitoring, EEG for fetal brain waves, radioimmunochemistry. Real time ultrasound came to fruition in 1976 so that we were able to see unborn children in motion. Since the 1970s, ultrasound capability has progressed in its resolution, so that we have been able to clearly see facial features and body structures. We know that at early stages unborn babies can taste, see, hear, and feel pain. Those unborn children who were in our minds factually human in 1973 became demonstrably human with these progressive technologies. Current scientific knowledge makes it crystal clear that through abortion we are painfully slaughtering unborn members of our human family.

I was adamantly prochoice until half way through the middle of my first child's pregnancy. As soon as I could feel that baby move, around 5 months, I started looking at things differently. I took perfect care of myself during that pregnancy, wouldn't eat anything with preservatives, refined sugar or flour; everything I ate was organically grown. Halfway through the pregnancy, It struck me—that little one, helpless and defenseless is totally dependent on what I ingest. I chose to eat extremely healthy, but I could have just as easily taken illicit drugs, excessive alcohol, junk food. That Voila! experience of seeing clearly the plight of the defenseless unborn child, made me want to defend them, and I have been forcefully in that mode ever since. I was raised by liberal Democrats during the 60s civil rights movement- how could I not stand up for the underdog?!

My third child was conceived, near as I can tell, my first week of medical residency, a far from planned pregnancy. Really bad timing. Back then, they didn't have home pregnancy tests. When I suspected I was pregnant, I went to

the student health clinic. After the results were in, the physician said to me, you're not going to keep this baby are you?" He proceeded to tell me how grueling the residency would be, how terrible it would be to be pregnant at this time, and how I needed to get an abortion. If this had been my first pregnancy, early on, before I felt the baby move, when I was still prochoice, I would likely have destroyed my child and painfully regretted it the rest of my life.

The pictures I present here attest to the humanity and personhood of the unborn. By classic dictionary definition, a human being and a person are the same thing. It is imperative that we acknowledge that we made a mistake, face the reality of the unborn made clear from technology, and declare their personhood. It is based on science, technology, and is the only logical and humane stance.

Once we grant that the unborn are human beings, persons, it should settle the question of their right to live. Personhood has an inherent value—a value that comes from being a member of the human race, created in the image of God. However, you don't have to be a member of a particular religion to know it's wrong to kill innocent human beings, or to believe that the quality of a society can be defined by how it treats its weakest and most vulnerable members. You cannot reject the inherent value of human life and simultaneously affirm the values of freedom and human rights that distinguish the United States of America.

That's why I consider abortion to be the ultimate civil rights issue in this nation and urge your support for SB.... To quote the late civil rights leader, Martin Luther King Jr., "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."